



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

March 25, 2008

The Honorable Martha Fuller Clark, Chairman
Energy, Environment and Economic Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 102
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 1353, an act extending the commission to study issues relative to groundwater withdrawals.

Dear Chairman Fuller Clark:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB1353 as amended by the House, which expands the duties of the Groundwater Commission and extends the Commission until 2010. The Department supports this bill.

HB 1353 directs the Groundwater Commission to study the criteria now used to determine if a large groundwater withdrawal can be approved and to consider if and how public benefit should also be considered. It also asks the Commission to determine what role is appropriate for municipalities in permitting large groundwater withdrawals and instructs the Commission to seek input from municipalities and other appropriate entities in that determination. Finally, it calls upon the Commission to participate in the development of a state-wide groundwater monitoring plan and the creation of educational materials that clarify the existing role and authorities of municipalities in groundwater withdrawal permitting. It also extends the Commission until 2010 and sets an interim final report date (November 30, 2009) for consideration of public benefit and municipal role issues.

The Department concurs that all of these issues warrant careful consideration. We believe that the Groundwater Commission is well suited for this charge because the Commission is both well balanced and well educated on the complex subject of groundwater occurrence and protection in New Hampshire. The Commission members have clearly demonstrated their ongoing commitment to ensuring that New Hampshire's groundwater is managed in a sustainable and proactive manner.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to comment on this bill. Please feel free to call me at 271-2958, or Sarah Pillsbury at 271-1168, if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,
Michael A. Willes, Asst. Comm.
for Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Senator Cilley
Representatives Kurk
Representative Harvey
Representative Buco
Representative D'Allesandro
Representative Spang